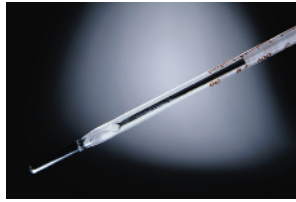


Virginia



Hospitals for a Healthy Environment



VH2E is a partnership to educate Virginia health care professionals about the significant environmental impacts of the health care industry and the many pollution prevention (P2) opportunities that are available to hospitals and other health care facilities. Environmental impacts of the health care sector can be statistically linked to public health problems and seemingly conflict with the creed of the health care industry to 'first, do no harm'. And yet, many of the accepted P2 techniques for the health care industry can be easily implemented and help increase compliance, reduce liability and even result in significant cost-savings.

VH2E was developed in support of the national Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) effort, and is committed to the goals of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the American Hospital Association and the US Environmental Protection Agency. VH2E partners should recognize that these are **voluntary goals for the entire industry**, and that individual facilities that sign the pledge are committing to do only their part in moving toward these national goals.

The National Goals

The H2E program -- now a partnership of four organizations: the American Hospital Association, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the American Nurses Association and Health Care Without Harm- revolves around a landmark agreement to advance pollution prevention efforts in our nation's hospitals. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is the cornerstone of the H2E initiative, calls for:

1. Virtually eliminating mercury-containing waste from hospitals' waste streams by 2005.

2. Reducing healthcare waste nationwide (both regulated and solid waste) by 50 percent by 2010.
3. Identifying and eliminating hazardous and persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals.

VH2E Goals

The Virginia program aims to replicate the national partnership on a state level, creating a network of hospital contacts within Virginia that can share information, resources and experience related to tackling some of the more challenging P2 issues while working to fulfill the national goals of H2E. VH2E has used the national goals to develop a list of specific measurable objectives for Virginia healthcare facilities. These were developed with the assistance of an initial VH2E workgroup that consists of the partnership organizations and various contributing healthcare facilities in Virginia.

VH2E Partners who sign the VH2E pledge are committing to:

I. Eliminate Mercury

- Task 1: Develop a list of mercury-containing products used within your facility.
- Task 2: Develop a Mercury-Free Purchasing Policy

II. Reduce Waste

- Task 1: Collect baseline data on Regulated Medical Waste (RMW) and Solid Waste.
- Task 2: Develop a RMW reduction program: perform in-service training for new RMW regulations and post VH2E signage.

III. Reduce Toxicity

Task 1: Establish a committee or 'Green Team' to encourage *Environmentally-Preferable Purchasing*, or EPP.

Task 2: Develop and implement 3 EPP/Toxicity Reduction projects

VH2E Starter Kit

VH2E has developed a *starter kit* which provides guidance to help facilities achieve the tasks of the VH2E pledge. The kit consists of three (3) guidance sheets, one for each of the national goals. Each provides a brief discussion of the goal and the tasks that make up the initial VH2E commitment. For each task, there are examples and a list of web-based resources.

Process, Recognition, & Resources

Facilities can join VH2E simply by sending in a signed VH2E pledge and information form (attached) to:

Virginia DEQ
ATTN: Tom Griffin
629 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

When a facility signs on to VH2E, it represents a voluntary commitment to both the VH2E and the national H2E program. The facility will be listed on both the VH2E (www.deq.state.va.us/p2/vh2e) and H2E (www.h2e-online.org) websites. It will receive guidance and updates on resources and be eligible for awards and additional recognition opportunities. In addition, the facility will receive a "welcome packet" from the national H2E program and a framed "certificate of commitment" from the Virginia DEQ; and the right to use either of the program logos.

Staff from H2E and Virginia DEQ will be available to provide assistance in program development. We encourage facilities to report ongoing waste reduction accomplishments. We can assist in promoting these accomplishments through the development of VH2E "Success Stories" that can be posted on the VH2E website. On an annual basis, facilities will be asked to report on progress, so we can track achievements. However, activities are strictly voluntary. We merely hope to use your facility's achievements as a role

model for other Virginia facilities.

How Else Can VH2E Assist You?

In addition to the VH2E starter kit and resources, the national H2E partner program was created to help hospitals find ways to meet the goals of the program while understanding some of the roadblocks and obstacles unique to the healthcare sector. H2E can offer your facility:

1. The national H2E website (www.h2e-online.org) is full of tools and resources created specifically for a healthcare audience with model plans for solid, infectious and chemical waste minimization, to name a few.
2. Check out *Going Green: A Resource Kit for Pollution Prevention in Healthcare* at www.noharm.org.
3. A listserv (available in daily, weekly or monthly formats) was developed for information-sharing among colleagues/peers who are doing similar pollution prevention work in healthcare facilities.
4. H2E's national awards and recognition program showcases facilities that are developing innovative programs and reaching their goals.
5. An 800 hotline (800-727-4179) and H2E email (h2e@h2e-online.org) is available for technical assistance.

Virginia Hospitals for a Healthy Environment

Contacts:

Tom Griffin, VA DEQ
804-698-4545; rtgriffin@deq.state.va.us
www.deq.state.va.us/p2/vh2e

Cecilia DeLoach, Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E)
202-234-0091, ext. 13; cdeloach@h2e-online.org
www.h2e-online.org
